

# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES

May 2002



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development

## Hard to declare robust recovery from recession amidst typical spring pickup

The nation's unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) fell from 6.1 percent in March percent to 5.7 percent in April. Wisconsin's rate fell from 6.5 percent to 5.7 percent, the South Central region of the state saw it's rate fall from 4.4 percent to 3.7 percent and Dane County's rate fell from 3.1 percent to 2.7 percent. Only 4 states reported greater unemployment rate declines than Wisconsin's drop of 0.8 percent.

Comparing current unemployment rates to the average of the unemployment rate in each April from 1990 to 2001, the United States and South Central Wisconsin experienced rates slightly higher than average. (See graph at right.) The same is true of Dane, Jefferson and Marquette Counties. Unemployment is more noticeably above its typical levels in Dodge County and in Wisconsin as a whole.

Columbia County is the only area discussed here that is currently at its average unemployment level and Sauk County is the only area that is below its average level.

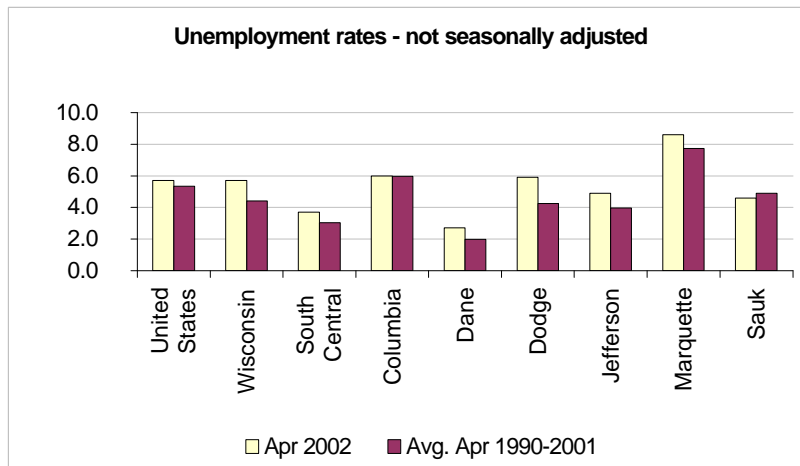
Averaging the March-to-April unemployment rate changes in each year from 1990 to 2001, the national unem-

ployment rate fell more slowly than it typically does. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate fell more quickly than usual for the South Central region and for each county in the region. (See graph on next page.)

Nationally, the Department of Commerce reported declines in housing starts in March and April. Locally, job growth in the construction industry has been slightly slower than usual in March and April. In part, this can be attributed to milder-than-usual weather in December and January permitting more construction activity than usual and resulting in less pent-up demand. In January and February, construction employment was stronger than it typically is, so the sector had less seasonal contraction to recover.

For the first time since last August,

manufacturing employment experienced modest gains in the South Central region and in the state as a whole. Dodge County, one of the most heavily industrial in the state, is still posting losses in manufacturing employment. This helps to explain why Dodge County continues to experience unem-



**Data for 2001 have been revised. Calculations referencing 2001 data are based on revised data.**

### Labor force estimates - not seasonally adjusted

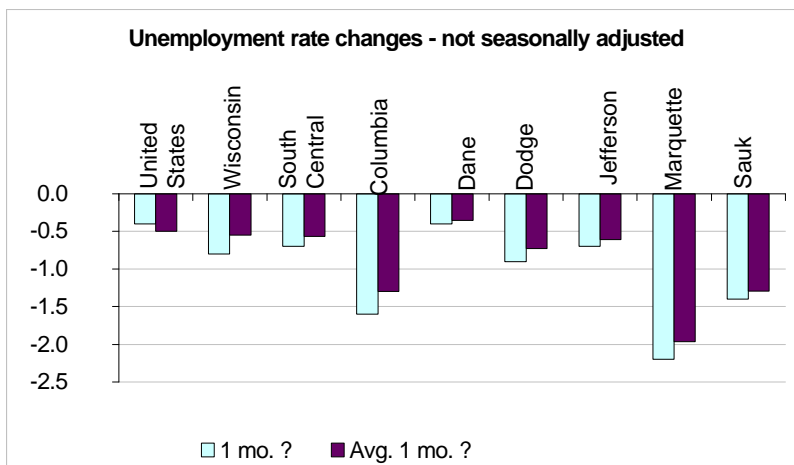
April 2002 Estimates	Wisconsin	South Central WI	Madison MSA	Columbia County	Dodge County	Jefferson County	Marquette County	Sauk County
<b>April 2002</b>								
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	3,047,100	443,700	278,900	28,300	48,200	44,200	7,500	36,600
Employed	2,873,600	427,200	271,400	26,600	45,400	42,100	6,900	34,900
Unemployed	173,500	16,500	7,400	1,710	2,900	2,200	640	1,680
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.7	3.7	2.7	6.0	5.9	4.9	8.6	4.6
<b>Change From March 2002</b>								
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	-4,200	2,400	2,300	40	-40	100	-50	60
Employed	21,700	5,400	3,500	470	390	420	120	570
Unemployed	-25,900	-3,000	-1,140	-430	-430	-320	-170	-510
Unemployment Rate (%)	-0.8	-0.7	-0.4	-1.6	-0.9	-0.7	-2.2	-1.4
<b>Change From April 2001</b>								
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	78,400	11,500	6,700	940	780	1,330	250	1,510
Employed	47,000	8,000	4,700	730	250	830	190	1,300
Unemployed	31,300	3,500	2,000	210	530	510	60	210
Unemployment Rate (%)	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.4

\* Includes people residing in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Numbers 2,000 and greater are rounded to nearest 100. Numbers under 2,000 are rounded to nearest 10. Sub-units may not add to totals due to rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers, results are rounded

ployment rates further above its normal level than its neighbors do. If this area matches national trends, its manufacturing workers may find little consolation in recent reports of employers increasing output while decreasing the number of hours worked. Many speculate that this trend is the result of businesses more fully implementing technology developed and acquired in the late 1990s and that employers are reluctant to hire workers whom they will have to lay off at a later time.

In the South Central region as a whole, retail employment is slightly above last April's figures and continues to follow typical seasonal trends

very closely. This concurs with national reports that consumer spending was strong in April. However, retail figures point the opposite direction as reports that retailers experienced low sales due to unseasonably cool weather in April. The greater-than-average increase in Dane County's retail employment in April may reflect it's greater-than-average loss of retail jobs in February. Sauk County's retail employment grew less quickly than it usually does in April, but still posted a respectable gain. This stands out only because retail employment in Sauk County usually accelerates from February through June.



**Data for 2001 have been revised. Calculations referencing 2001 data are based on revised data.**

**Payroll employment estimates - not seasonally adjusted**

April 2002 Estimates	Wisconsin	South Central WI	Madison MSA	Columbia County	Dodge County	Jefferson County	Marquette County	Sauk County
<b>April 2002</b>								
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	2,811,600	429,300	295,200	21,500	34,800	37,700	3,700	36,300
Construction & Mining	119,700	18,000	11,700	1,040	2,100	1,120	240	1,900
Manufacturing	563,500	66,900	29,400	5,600	11,900	11,600	1,190	7,200
Transport & Public Util.	131,300	15,100	10,500	610	1,330	1,500	80	1,040
Wholesale Trade	136,800	17,100	12,100	740	1,090	1,320	100	1,770
Retail Trade	497,400	74,300	49,300	4,200	5,000	7,300	660	7,700
Finance, Ins. Real Estate	151,800	27,000	23,700	420	790	820	110	1,150
Services	781,900	113,700	81,300	4,800	7,200	9,700	600	10,100
Government	429,200	97,100	77,200	4,000	5,500	4,300	760	5,400
<b>Change From March 2002</b>								
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	35,900	6,200	4,200	310	380	440	180	620
Construction & Mining	10,800	1,420	780	80	190	110	100	150
Manufacturing	1,320	20	180	30	-160	-60	-10	30
Transport & Public Util.	1,180	210	110	20	0	30	0	50
Wholesale Trade	970	130	50	20	40	20	10	0
Retail Trade	7,300	980	400	200	70	160	10	140
Finance, Ins. Real Estate	490	160	110	0	10	20	0	20
Services	11,400	1,410	1,110	-120	100	140	40	140
Government	2,500	1,850	1,500	80	130	20	30	90
<b>Change From April 2001</b>								
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	-8,100	8,900	6,900	1,080	-730	-410	-60	2,100
Construction & Mining	-4,100	-1,860	-1,830	30	70	-50	-10	-70
Manufacturing	-48,600	-3,500	-1,290	330	-1,450	-1,360	30	220
Transport & Public Util.	-2,000	210	450	-100	60	-230	-10	40
Wholesale Trade	-1,630	-630	-530	-40	-30	-100	10	50
Retail Trade	9,500	2,400	1,410	40	120	260	-70	650
Finance, Ins. Real Estate	4,600	1,880	1,800	-10	-20	40	0	80
Services	23,600	8,600	5,900	580	220	840	30	990
Government	10,500	1,840	980	240	300	190	-50	180

cludes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Numbers 2,000 and greater are rounded to nearest 10. Sub-units may not add to totals due to rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers, results are rounded.

**Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: [www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi).**

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